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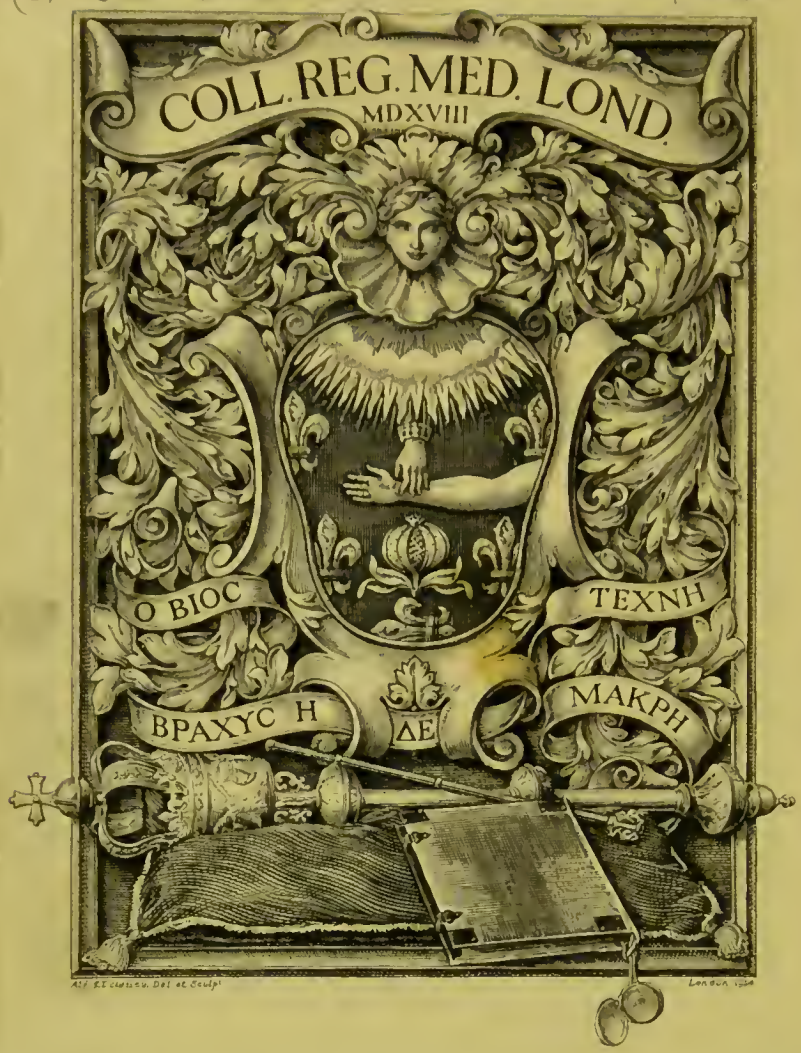
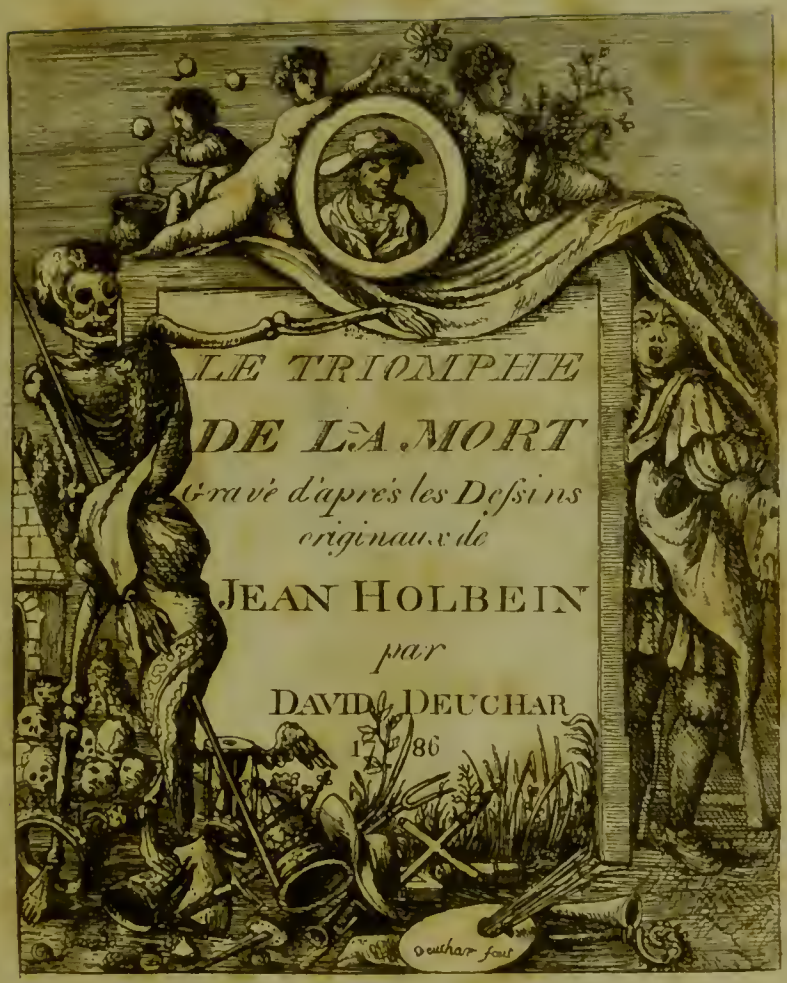


Humphry Rolleston



Mors Sceptra ligonibus æquat.

THE

DANCES OF DEATH,

THROUGH

THE VARIOUS STAGES OF HUMAN LIFE:

WHEREIN

THE CAPRICIOUSNESS OF THAT TYRANT

IS EXHIBITED

IN FORTY-SIX COPPER PLATES;

DONE FROM

The Original Designs,

WHICH

WERE CUT IN WOOD, AND AFTERWARDS PAINTED,

BY JOHN HOLBEIN,

IN THE TOWN HOUSE OF BASIL.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED,

Descriptions of each Plate in French and English, with the Scripture Text from which the Designs were taken.

ETCHED BY D. DEUCHAR, F.A.S.

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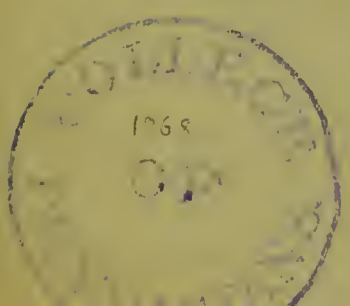
1803.



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PREFACE.

JOHN or HANS HOLBEIN was born at Basil in 1498, and died at London of the plague in 1554, aged 56. This admirable Painter was instructed in the art by his father JOHN HOLBEIN. In the early part of his life, he pursued his studies with incessant assiduity; and being possessed of an elevated genius, his progress was exceedingly rapid; so that he soon became far superior to his instructor. He painted equally well in oil, water colours, and in fresco; and although he had never practised the art of painting in miniature till he resided in England, yet he afterwards carried it to its highest perfection.

The invention of Holbein was suprisingly fruitful, and often poetical; his execution was remarkably quick, and his application indefatigable. His pencil was exceedingly delicate; his coloring had a wonderful degree of force; he finished his pictures with exquisite neatness; and his carnations were life itself. He excelled all his cotemporaries in portrait, and his genuine works are always distinguishable by the true, round, lively imitation of flesh visible in them, and also by the amazing delicacy of his finishing.

The genius and excellence of this master were sufficiently shewn in the historical style, by two celebrated compositions which he painted in the Hall of the Steel-yard Company; of which the subjects were the Triumph of Riches, and the condition of Poverty: these two are universally admired for the richness of the colouring, as also for the strong character of the figures through the whole. Frederick Zucchero, on seeing these pictures, expressed the highest esteem for Holbein, and even copied them in Indian ink.

In the town of Basil he painted a picture of our Saviour's Sufferings, as well as a Dance of Peasants.

Abbé du Bos observes, that the altar-piece at Basil, painted by Holbein, may be compared with the best productions of Raphael's disciples for composition, and preferred to them with respect to colouring; that he shews a greater degree of knowledge of the chiaro-scuro, and particular incidents of light that are truly marvellous. But that which contributed most to raise and establish the reputation of this celebrated Painter was Death's Dance, designed and painted by him in the town-house of Basil; a work truly admirable, and which alone was sufficient to render the name of Holbein immortal.

Sandrart relates, that he heard Rubens acknowledge, that he had learned a great deal from the pictures of Death's Dance; and he recommended them strongly to the study of many of his own profession.

The learned Erasmus was so much struck by the wonderful display of genius exhibited in this great work, that he conceived a strong friendship for Holbein; sat to him for his picture; and recommended him to Sir Thomas Moore, the then Lord Chancellor of England: and to this incident our country is indebted for the many excellent performances which it afterwards received from the pencil of Holbein.

The designs for Death's Dance were cut in wood by Holbein, and published with the original texts from which they were taken; from that work the following plates were done. They contain the whole of Death's Dance, with borders and decorations; to which are added, a description of each plate in French and English, and a portrait of Holbein.

Formauit Dominus DEVS hominem de limo terræ, ad imaginem suam creauit illum, masculum & fœminam creauit eos GENESIS

EXPLANATIONS

OF

THE SUBJECTS

OF

THE TRIUMPH OF DEATH,

BY HANS HOLBEIN.

PLATE I.—FRONTISPIECE.

At the side of a stone table, placed vertically, Holbein appears behind a curtain, which Death opens to him, to place before his eyes the great Spectacle of the Scenes of human Life that he is going to sketch. This is also expressed by an heap of the attributes of grandeur, dignities, riches, arts, and sciences, mixed with death-heads, which Death is trampling under his feet. Below is an epitaph from Lucan—*Mors sceptra ligonibus æquat. Death confounds the sceptre with the spade.* This table is topped with a medallion, with the portrait of Holbein. Two Genii support this medallion; the one surrounded with a garland of flowers, the other lets fly a butterfly, whilst a third is amusing himself with making soap bubbles. What these allegories mean is easily understood.

PLANCHE I.—LE FRONTISPIECE.

À côté d'une table de pierre posée verticalement, Holbein paroît derrière un rideau que la Mort lui ouvre, pour mettres ous ses yeux le grand Spectacle des Scènes de la Vie humaine qui'l va dessiner. Ce qui est encore désigné par un amas d'attributs de la grandeur, des dignités, des richesses, d'arts, de sciences, entremêlés de têtes de morts, et que la Mort elle-même foule à ses pieds. On lit au bas cette épigraphe tirée de Lucain :—

Mors sceptra ligonibus æquat,
La Mort confond la sceptre & la bêche.

Cette table est surmountée d'un medaillon avec le portrait de Holbein. Deux Génies soutiennent ce médaillon ; l'un l'entoure d'une guirlan de defleurs, & l'autrelaisse échapper un papillon, tandis qu'un troisième s'amuse à faire des bulles de savon. On sent assez ce que signifient ces deux allégories.

PECCATUM

Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuæ, & comedisti de lig-
no ex quo præceperam tibi ne comederes, maledicta terra GEN.

PLATE II.—SIN.

HOLBEIN has begun the scenes of life by that which had such influence on all the rest. The Mother of the human race holds in her right hand, the fatal apple, which she has just received from the serpent with a young man's head; and Adam, at the same time, is plucking another, enticed by the solicitations of the too credulous Eve, who shews him the one she has received.

Quia audisti vocem uxoris tuæ, et comedisti de ligno, ex quo præceperam tibi, Ne comederes, &c. Gen. iii. 17.

PLANCHE II.—LE PECHE.

HOLBEIN a commencé ces scènes de la vie par celle qui eut tant d'influence sur toutes les autres. La Mère du genre humain, tient dans sa main droite, la pomme fatale qu'elle vient de recevoir du serpent à tête de jeune homme, & Adam en cueille en même tems une autre, excité par les sollicitations de la trop crédule Eve, qui lui montre celle qu'elle a reçue.

PLATE III.—PUNISHMENT.

Our first parents, driven out by the Angel, are flying from the terrestrial Paradise, preceded by Death, who is playing on the fiddle, and shews by dancing the joy he feels for his triumph.

Emisit eum Dominus Deus de Paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur terram, de qua sumptus est. Gen. iii. 23.

PLANCHE III.—LA PUNITION.

Nos premiers Parens chassés par l'Ange, s'enfuyent du Paradis terrestre précédés de la Mort, qui joue de la guitare, & démontre en dansant la joie qu'elle ressent de son triomphe.

MORS.

Emisit eum Dominus Deus de paradiso voluptatis, ut operaretur terram, de qua sumptus
GEN. III.

MALEDICTA Terra in opere tuo, in laboribus comedes
cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ .donec reverteris &c. GE. 3

PLATE IV.—CONDEMNATION TO LABOUR.

HOLBEIN, to mark at once the species of labour which is the lot of man, and that which falls to the share of the woman, represents Adam employed in rooting up a tree, along with Death, who helps him with all his might; and at a little distance Eve suckling her child, and holding a distaff.

Maledicta terram opere tuo in laboribus, comedes cunctis diebus vitæ tuæ donec revertaris, &c. Gen. iii. 14.

PLANCHE IV.—LA CONDEMNATION AU TRAVAIL.

HOLBEIN, pour marquer en même tems le genre de travail qui est le partage de l'homme, & celui quiest le partage de la femme, représente Adam occupé à déraciner un arbre, avec la Mort qui l'aide de toutes ses forces, & un peu plus loin, Eve allaitant son enfant & tenant une quenouille.

PLATE V.—THE POPE CROWNING AN EMPEROR.

A CARDINAL and three bishops are assisting at the ceremony: Death is there also under the figure of two skeletons, one of which is dressed in cardinal's robes, the other embraces the holy Father, with the right hand, and is leaning on a crutch with the left.

Moriatur sacerdos magnus. Josh. xx. 6.
Et episcopatum ejus accipiat alter. Psal. cviii. 8.

PLANCHE V.—LE PAPE COURONNANT UN EMPEREUR.

UN cardinal & trois evêques assistent à cette cérémonie; la Mort s'y trouve aussi sous la figure de deux squelettes, dont l'un est revêtu des habits de cardinal; l'autre embrasse le St. Père de la main droite, et s'appuie de la gauche sur une béquille.

Moriatur Sacerdos magnus. JOSUE. XX.
Et episcopatum eius accipiat alter. Psal. 108

Væ qui justificatis impium pro muneribus, & justitiam justi auferetis ab eo. ESAIAE V.

PLATE VI.—THE CARDINAL.

A MESSENGER has just presented to him, on his knees, the bull that constitutes him a cardinal. Death seizes this moment to make his appearance, and seems to want to turn his hat upon his head. The messenger is holding in his right hand a tin box, hung by a strap, in which he had, no doubt, carried the bull, which the new made cardinal holds in his right hand with the seals appended to it.

Væ qui justificatis impium pro muneribus, et justitiam justi aufertis ab eo. Isa. v. 23

PLANCHE VI.—LE CARDINAL.

UN messager vient de lui remettre, en faisant une génuflexion, la bulle qui le fait cardinal. La Mort saisit ce moment pour paroître, et semble vouloir lui faire tourner son chapeau sur la tête. Le messager tient de la main droite une boîte de fer-blanc, pendu à une courroie, et dans laquelle il avoit sans doute apporté la bulle, que le cardinal nouvellement créé tient à la main droite avec les sceaux y affixé.

PLATE VI.—THE ELECTOR.

This prince, as he is coming out of his palace with his courtiers, is accosted by a poor woman, who implores his help for herself and the infant she holds by the hand; but he, insensible to the distresses of the widow and orphan, refuses to listen, and is turning aside with a disdainful air to his courtiers. Death at this instant appears; and his severe aspect announces, that he is just about to make him repent his hard heartedness.

Princeps induetur mœrore, et quiescere faciam superbiam potentium. Ezek. vii. 24, 27.

PLANCHE VII.—L'ELECTEUR.

Ce prince sortant de son palais avec ses courtisans, est abordé par une pauvre femme qui implore son secours, pour elle & pour l'enfant qu'elle tient par la main ; mais insensible aux besoins de la veuve & de l'orphelin, il refuse de l'écouter, & se tourne d'un air dédaigneux du côté de ses courtisans. La Mort paroît dans cet instant, & son air sévère annonce qu'elle va le faire répentir de la dureté.

Princeps induetur mœrore. Et quiescere faciam superbiam potentium. EZECH. VII.

Percutiam Pastorem, & dispergentur oues gregis. MAT. XXVI. MAR. XIIII.

PLATE VIII.—THE BISHOP.

With an air of tranquillity and resignation, this worthy Pastor follows Death, who is leading him away laughing and dancing, whilst some shepherds, forgetting their flocks, are wandering here and there through the country, in despair for the loss of their chief. The sun, now ready to set, is just about to leave in darkness the ill-fated flocks, who, having no longer a conductor, will soon become the prey of wolves and other ravenous animals.

Percutiam pastorem, et dispergentur oves gregis. Matt. xxvi. 31.

PLANCHE VIII.—L'EVEQUE.

D'un air de tranquillité & de résignation ce bon Pasteur suit la Mort, qui l'emmène en riant et en dansant, tandis que quelques bergers, oubliant leur troupeau, errent çà & là dans la campagne, désespérés de la perte de leur chef. Le soleil prêt à se coucher, va laisser dans les ténèbres ce malheureux troupeau, qui n'ayant plus de conducteur, sera bientôt la proie du loup & des autres bêtes féroces.

PLATE IX.—THE CANON.

At the moment he is entering the church, Death accosts him; and, shewing him an hour-glass run down, announces that his hour is come. He appears to be a dignitary of the first rank; for he is followed by a page, a huntsman, who carries a falcon on his fist, and a fool.

Ecce appropinquavit hora. Matth. xxvi. 45.

PLANCHE IX.—LE CHANOINE.

Au moment où il entre dans l'église, la Mort l'aborde, & en lui montrant un sable écoulé, lui annonce que son heure est venue. Il paroît que c'est un dignitaire du premier rang, puis qu'il est suivi d'un page, d'un veneur qui porte un faucon sur le poing, & d'un bouffon.

Ecce appropinquat hora. MAT. XXVI

Sedentes in tenebris & in umbra mortis, vinctos in mendicitate. PSAL. CVI.

PLATE X.—THE FRIAR PROVISOR.

As he is just stepping into his convent, with his Christmas-box and wallet, Death stops him at the door; and deaf to his cries, as well as regardless of the fright he throws him into, drags him with all his might by the cloak, and renders all the good Friar's attempts to disengage himself ineffectual.

Sedentes in tenebris & umbra Mortis: vinctos in mendicitate. Psal. cvi. 10.

PLANCHE X.—LE FRERE QUETEUR.

Pret à rentrer dans son couvent avec sa tire-lire & sa besace, la Mort l'arrête à la porte, & toute aussi sourde à ses cris, qu'in sensible à l'effroi qu'elle lui cause, elle le tire de toutes ses forces par son capuchon, & rend impuissans les efforts du bon Frère pour se dérober de ses mains.

PLATE XI.—THE ABBE.

Death, not contented with stripping this fat Prelate of his crosier, which he is carrying in triumph on his shoulder, and his mitre, with which he is dressing himself, is dragging him away without pity. He raises his breviary with one hand, and with the other is making some vain efforts to push him off.

Ipse morietur, quia non habuit disciplinam, et in multitudine stultitiæ decipietur. Prov. v. 23.

PLANCHE XI.—L'ABBÉ.

La Mort non contente d'avoir arraché à ce gros Prélat sa crosse, qu'elle porte en triomphe sur son épaule, & sa mitre, dont elle s'est affublée, le tire encore impitoyablement après elle; il élève d'une main son breviaire, & fait de l'autre de vains efforts pour la repousser.

Ipse mendax qua non habuit disciplinam, & in multitudine fatuitatis sua decipitur. PROVERB.

Laudaui magis mortuos, quam viuentes. ECCLE. IV.

PLATE XII.—THE ABBESS.

Death ludicrously hooded with several flowing plumes, and robed in a kind of gown, carries out of her convent an Abbess, whom he is dragging with all his might by her scapulary. The reverend Mother with regret is leaving life and the honours she enjoys; and expresses, by the alteration of her features and by her cries, the fright that Death has produced in her soul. Behind her, under the gate of the convent, appears a young Nun, strangely agitated with terror and grief.

Laudavi magis mortuos, quam viventes. Eccl. iv. 2.

PLANCHE XII.—L'ABBESSE.

La Mort ridiculement coiffée de diverses plumes flottantes, & vêtue d'une espèce de mante, emmène hors de son couvent une Abbesse qu'elle tire de toutes ses forces par son scapulaire. La révérendissime Mère quitte à regret la vie & les honneurs dont elle jouit, & exprime par l'altération de ses traits & par ses cris, l'effroi que la Mort a jeté dans son ame. On voit derrière elle, sous la porte de l'abbaye, une jeune Nonne vivement agitée par la crainte & par la douleur.

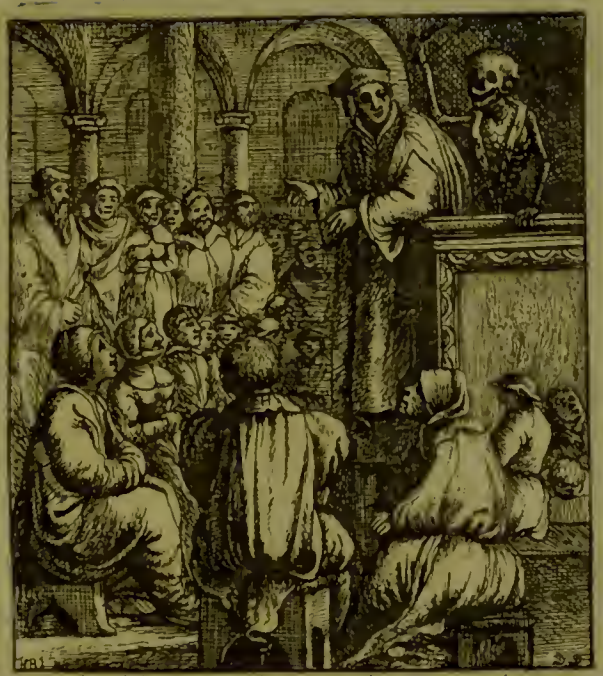
PLATE XIII.—THE PREACHER.

As he is preaching to his congregation, Death, who is behind him with a stole about his neck, holds over his head the bone of a dead body, and by shewing it to the assembly, preaches to them, undoubtedly, the most eloquent of all sermons.

Væ qui dicitis malum bonum, et bonum malum: ponentes tenebras lucem, et lucem tenebras: ponentes amarum in dulce, & dulce in amarum. Esaiæ v. 20.

PLANCHE XIII.—LE PREDICATEUR.

Tandis qu'il prêche son auditoire, la Mort qui est derrière lui, une étole au cou, élève par-dessus sa tête un os de mort, & en la montrant à l'assemblée lui fait sans doute le plus éloquent de tous les sermons.



Væ qui dicitis malum bonum, & bonum malum: ponentes tenebras lucem, & lucem tenebras: ponentes amarum in dulce, & dulce in amarum. ESAIE. V.

Sum quidem Nec mortalis homo. SAP. VII.

PLATE XIV.—THE PRIEST.

He appears carrying the Holy Sacrament along the street to a dying man. Death marches before him, carrying the lantern and a little bell. He is followed by a boy, who carries the holy water and a taper, and by a young woman with a mournful aspect, who seems to have come in quest of him.

Sum quidem & ego mortalis homo. Sapi. vii. 1.

PLANCHE XIV.—LE PRETRE.

On le voit dans la rue porter le St. Sacrement à un moribond. La Mort marche devant lui, et porte la lanterne & la clochette. Il est suivi d'un garçon qui porte l'eau bénite & un cierge, & d'une jeune femme affligée qui paroît être venue le chercher.

PLATE XV.—THE PHYSICIAN.

Death is leading to him a sick old man, whose urine he is presenting to him in a phial, and appears saying, in a jeering manner, Dost thou think that thou art able to save a man whom I have already in my power?

Medice cura teipsum. Lucæ iv. 23.

PLANCHE XV.—LE MEDECIN.

La Mort lui amène un vieillard malade dont elle lui présente l'urine dans une phiole, & paroit lui dire d'un air moqueur; Crois-tu pouvoir sauver un homme que je tiens déjà en ma puissance?

Medicæ curate ipsum. LVCAE. IIII.

Indica mihi si nosti omnia. Sciebas quod nasci
taxus esses. X numerum dierum tuorum n

PLATE XVI.—THE ASTROLOGER.

He has his eyes fixed on a sphere hanging from the ceiling, and appears profoundly engaged in the vain chimeras of judicial astrology, while Death comes to turn his attention upon a death-head, which he is presenting to him in a most grotesque attitude, seeming to say, in a jeering tone, Could thy sublime art inform thee, that I was coming to pay thee this visit to-day?

Indica mihi, si nosti, omnia sciebas. Tunc quod nasciturus esses? & numerum dierum tuorum noveras? Job xxxviii. 18, 21.

PLANCHE XVI.—L'ASTROLOGUE.

Il a les yeux fixés sur une sphère suspendue au plancher, & paroît profondément occupé des vaines chiméres de l'astrologie judiciaire, tandis que la Mort vient tourner son attention sur une tête de mort, qu'elle lui présente dans l'attitude la plus grotesque, & semble lui dire d'un ton railleur; Ton art sublime a-t-il pu t'apprendre que je viendrois te rendre aujourd'hui cette visite?

PLATE XVII.—THE EMPEROR.

Seated on a throne, and holding in his hand the sword of state, he is attentively listening to an advocate pleading in a soothing tone, against an unfortunate peasant, who trembling waits, in the most suppliant posture, the decree that is to determine his fate. Death at this moment displays all his power; he proudly takes possession of the bottom of the throne, and is carelessly leaning his arm on the Monarch's crown. The angry aspect, with which the Emperor views the advocate and his two clients, who are seen standing with their heads uncovered, is a happy presage for the poor oppressed peasant. At the foot of the throne are lying the sceptre and globe of the empire, placed on a cushion. Death has set down his fatal glass beside these attributes of grandeur, which he can cause to vanish at his pleasure.

Dispone domui tuæ, quia morieris tu, et non vives. Isaiæ xxxviii. 1.
Ibi morieris, et ibi erit currus gloriæ tuæ. Isaiæ xxii. 18.

PLANCHE XVII.—L'EMPEREUR.

Assis sur son trône, & tenant dans sa main le glaive de l'empire, il écoute attentivement un avocat qui plaide d'un ton doucereux contre un malheureux paysan, tandis que celui-ci attend en tremblant, & dans la posture la plus suppliante, l'arrêt qui doit décider de son sort. La Mort développe en ce moment toute sa puissance; elle occupe fièrement la fond du trône, & appuie nonchalemment son brass sur la couronne du Monarque. L'air irrité avec lequel le Chef de l'Empire regarde l'avocat & ses deux cliens qu'on voit, la tête découverte, à côté de leur défenseur, est d'un heureux présage pour le pauvre opprimé. On vait au bas du trône le sceptre & le globe de l'empire posés sur un coussin. La Mort a placé son sable fatal à côté de ces attributs d'une grandeur qu'elle peut fair évanouir à son gré.

Dispone domui tuæ, morieris enim tu, & non
ISAIAE XXXVIII.
Ibi morieris & ibi, erit currus gloriæ tuæ. ISAIAE XV.

Sicut ℟ex hodie est, ℟eras moritur: nemo enim ex regibus aliud habuit.
ECCLES.

PLATE XVIII.—THE KING.

He is seen, eating in state, under a canopy, and served by the officers of the court. Death is come to put himself in the number, and is at this instant performing the office of cupbearer. He is pouring out drink to the Monarch, who holds out to him his great cup, which he is now probably to empty for the last time. The Prince holds in his left hand a paper, without doubt a petition, that has just been presented to him.

Sicut et Rex hodie est, et cras morietur. Eccle. x. 12.
Nemo enim ex regibus aliud habuit.

PLANCHE XVIII.—LE ROI.

On le voit manger en cérémonie, assis sous un dais & servi par ses grands officiers; la Mort est venue se mettre du nombre, & fait en ce moment l'office d'echanson. Elle verse à boire au Monarque qui lui tend sa large coupe, qu'il va vraisemblablement vuider pour la dernière fois. Ce Prince tient de la main gauche un papier, sans doute un placet qu'on vient de lui remettre.

PLATE XIX.—THE EMPRESS.

In the midst of a pompous march, in the court of a great palace, Death, who seems here to do the office of gentleman-usher, leads this Princess to the brink of a grave, and shews her the bounds within which all her grandeur is to be confined.

Gradientes in superbia potest Deus humiliare. Daniel iv. 34.

PLANCHE XIX.—L'IMPERATRICE.

Au milieu d'une marche pompeuse, dans la cour d'un vaste palais, la Mort qui paroît faire ici l'office d'ecuyer, amène cette Princesse jusqu'au bord d'une fosse sépulcrale, pour lui faire voir le terme auquel ses grandeurs viendront aboutir.

radientes in superbia potest DEUS *humilia.*
DANIE. IIII.

Mulieres opulentæ surgite, audite vocem meam: Post dies & annum, & vos conturbemini. ISAIAE. XXXII.

PLATE XX.—THE QUEEN.

Death, arrayed in the habits of folly, drags away violently this young Princess, just as she is coming out of her palace to enjoy the pleasure of walking. With terror painted in her countenance, she is making the air resound with mournful cries; the maid of honour, who accompanies her, agitated with the most violent despair, is imploring the aid of Heaven, while the buffoon is making vain efforts to defend her against Death, who holds aloft his glass, to shew that the fatal hour is come.

Mulieres opulentæ surgite, & audite vocem meam: post dies enim & annum, vos conturbabimini confidentes. Isaiæ xxxii. 9, 10.

PLANCHE XX.—LA REINE.

La Mort revêtue des habits de la folie, entraine avec violence cette jeune Princesse, au moment qu'elle sort de son palais pour jouïr du plaisir de la promenade; la terreur peinte sur le visage elle faite rétentir les airs de ses cris douloureux; la dame d'honneur qui l'accompagne, agitée du plus violent désespoir, implore le secours du Ciel, tandis que le bouffon de la Reine fait de vains efforts pour la défendre contre la Mort, qui tient son sable élevé pour faire voir que l'heure fatale est arrivée.

PLATE XXI.—THE DUTCHESS.

Death, in the shape of two hideous skeletons, comes to surprise her as she is lying softly on an elegant bed. One of the skeletons awakes her with the sound of a violin, while the other is pulling off her bed-clothes, making frightful grimaces.

De lectulo, super quem ascendisti, non descendes, sed morte morieris. 4 Reg. i. 4.

PLANCHE XXI.—LA DUCHESSE.

Sous la figure de deux sequelettes hideux, la Mort vient la surprendre, mollement couchée sur un lit élégant. L'un des squelettes la réveille au son d'un violon, tandis que l'autre lui arrache sa couverture en faisant d'effroyables grimaces.

De lecto ſuper quem aſcendisti, non de-
ſcendes ſed morte morieris. IIII. REG. I.

Ducunt in bonis dies suos, & in puncto ad inferna descendunt. JOB XXI

PLATE XXII.—THE COUNTESS.

She is wholly taken up with the care of her dress, and is receiving with eagerness, from the hands of one of her maids, a very rich robe with a gold chain. Death comes to derange her toilet, and has already, without being perceived, slipped round her neck a collar made of small bones.

Ducunt in bonis dies suos, et in puncto ad inferna descendunt. Job xxi. 13.

PLANCHE XXII.—LA COMTESSE.

Elle n'est occupée que du soin de sa parure, & reçoit avec empressement, des mains d'une de ses femmes, un habillement très-riche avec une chaîne d'or. La Mort vient troubler sa toilette, & lui a déjà passé autour du cou, sans qu'elle s'en soit encore aperçue, un collier fait de petits os de mort.

PLATE XXIII.—THE NEW-MARRIED PAIR.

In the first transports of an happy union, this tender couple appears so wholly taken up with each other, and so inebriated with their mutual happiness, that they neither see nor hear. Death, who is marching before them, beating furiously on a little drum, is soon to give a cruel interruption to their enjoyments.

Sola mors me et te separaverit. Ruth i. 17.

PLANCHE XXIII.—LES NOUVEAUX MARIES.

Dans les premiers transports d'une douce union, ces deux tendres époux paroissent tellement occupés l'un de l'autre, ils sont si enivrés de leur bonheur mutuel, qu'ils ne voient ni n'entendent la Mort qui marche devant eux, en frappant vigoureusement sur un petit tambour, & qui va leur donner bientôt un cruel trouble-fête.

Me & te ſi la Mors ſépara ibi. RUTH. I.

Est via, quæ videtur homini justa: novissima autem ejus deducunt hominem ad mortem.
PROVERB. XIV.

PLATE XXIV.—THE CANONESS.

THERE appears in this young and beautiful recluse, a striking mixture of gallantry and devotion. On her knees before a little altar, with her rosary in her hand, she is amorously listening to the songs which a young man, seated on a bed, addresses to her, accompanying them with his lute. Death comes to put out the tapers burning on the altar, and to change into sadness the pleasures of this conversation.

Est via, quæ videtur homini justa : novissima autem ejus deducunt hominem ad mortem. Prov. xiv. 12.

PLANCHE XXIV.—LA CHANOINESSE.

L'ON voit dans cette jeune & belle recluse un mélange frappant de galanterie & de dévotion. Agenouillée devant un petit autel, son rosaire à la main, elle écoute amoureusement les chansons qu'un jeune homme, assis sur son lit, lui adresse en les accompagnant de son luth. La Mort vient éteindre les cierges allumés sur l'autel, & changer en amertume les douceurs de ce tête-à-tête.

PLATE XXV.—THE COUNT.

Death here adds to his usual employment that of avenger of oppressed vassals. He is throwing with violence at the head of this Lord, his coat of arms, the dear object of his pride, under the weight of which he is ready to make him fall. He appears trampling under foot a flail, to mark his inhumanity to labourers, a class of society so necessary and respectable. On the ground also are to be seen the remains of the helmet which formed the crest of his arms, with the other ornaments that decorated them.

Quoniam cum interierit, non sumet omnia: neque descendet cum eo gloria ejus. Psal. xlvii. 18.

PLANCHE XXV.—LE COMTE.

La Mort ajoute ici à l'exercice de son emploi accoutumé celui de vengeur de vassaux opprimés; elle jette avec violence à la tête de ce Seigneur ses armoiries, l'objet chéri de son orgueil, sous le poids desquelles elle va le faire périr. On le voit fouler à ses pieds un fléau, pour désigner son inhumanité envers les laboureurs, cette classe de la société si nécessaire & si respectable; on peut encore remarquer à terre, les débris du casque dont ces armoiries étoient surmontées avec d'autres ornemens qui les décoroient.

Quoniam cum interierit, non sumet secum omnia, neque cum eo descendet gloria ejus.

PSAL. LXVIII.

Subito morientur, & in media nocte turbabun tur populi, & auferent violentum absq; manu Iob XXXIV

PLATE XXVI.—THE KNIGHT.

This worthy Cavalier, returned victorious from so many combats and tournaments, comes at length to meet his match. Death has run him through the body with a furious stroke of the lance, and is laughing at the vain efforts he makes to defend himself.

Subito morientur, & in media nocte turbabuntur populi, & auferent violentum absque manu. Job xxxiv. 20.

PLANCHE XXVI.—LE CHEVALIER.

Ce preux Chevalier sorti vainqueur de tant de combats & de tant de tournois, vient enfin de trouver son maître. La Mort l'a percé de part en part d'un furieux coup de lance, & se rit des vains efforts qu'il met en usage pour se défendre contr'elle.

PLATE XXVII.—THE GENTLEMAN.

He is doing every thing in his power to put off the moment that is to separate him for ever from his possessions, and his fine seat, which appears in the back ground; but Death inexorable has already set down beside him the fatal bier, into which he is about to make him enter.

Quis est homo, qui vivet, et non videbit mortem: eruet animam suam de manu inferi? Psal. lxxxviii. 49.

PLANCHE XXVII.—LE GENTILHOMME.

Il fait tout ce qu'il peut pour reculer le moment qui doit le séparer pour toujours de ses possessions, & de son beau château qui paroît dans le lointain; mais la Mort inéxorable a déjà placé près de lui la bière fatale où elle va le faire entrer.

Quis est homo, qui vivet, & non videbit Mortem? & eruet animam suam de manu inferi. PSAL. 88

Cum fortis armatus custodit atrium suum, &c.
Si autem fortior eo superueniens uicerit eum, uniuersa
arma eius auferet, in quibus confidebat. LVC. XI

PLATE XXVIII.—THE SWISS SOLDIER.

On a field of battle, covered with dead carcasses, Death, armed with a buckler and a huge dart, attacks this warrior, in the bosom of victory, escaped alone from the carnage of the day, and is giving him some terrible blows. It is in vain that this brave Soldier, whose courage seems invincible, is obstinately attempting to dispute the victory with an irresistible adversary. In the back ground appears another Death, running, and beating on a drum, who is followed by several soldiers.

Cum fortis armatus custodit atrium suum, &c. Si autem fortior eo superveniens vicerit eum, universa ejus arma auferet, in quibus confidebat. Lucæ xi. 21, 22.

PLANCHE XXVIII.—LE SOLDAT SUISSE.

Sur un champ de bataille jonché de cadavres, la Mort armée d'un bouclier & d'un grand javelot, attaque dans le sein de la victoire ce guerrier échappé seul au carnage, & lui port des coups terribles. C'est en vain que ce brave Soldat dont la valeur sembloit indomptable, s'acharne à disputer la victoire à un adversaire auquel rien ne sauroit résister. Dans le lointain on apperçoit une autre Mort qui bat du tambour en courant, & qui est suivie de quelques soldats.

PLATE XXIX.—THE JUDGE.

It appears that this supporter of Justice, forgetting the dignity of his station, abandons himself without shame to injustice. He is stretching out his hand for the gold that the rich man is going to give him, without doubt to obtain of him a favourable decision, and to bear down the poor unfortunate man, who appears in a trembling posture at the side of the Judge. Death comes to surprise him in the midst of his prevarications, and is snatching out of his hands the rod which is the mark of his dignity.

Disperdam judicem de medio ejus. Amos ii. 3.

PLANCHE XXIX.—LE JUGE.

Il paroît que ce suppôt de Thémis, oubliant la dignité de sa place, s'abandonne sans pudeur à l'iniquité. Il tend la main à l'or que cet homme riche va lui donner, sans doute pour en obtenir un jugement favorable, & faire succomber le pauvre malheureux qu'on voit dans une attitude craintive à côté du Juge. La Mort vient le surprendre au milieu de ses prévarications, & lui arrache des mains la baguette qui est la marque de sa dignité.

Disperdam iudicem de medio eius. AMOS. II

Qui obturat aurem suam ad clamorem pauperis. Ipse clamabit. Non exaudietur. PROVER.

PLANCHE XXX.—THE COUNSELLOR.

This magistrate appears deeply engaged in giving, in the open street, to a rich man, the advices which a little devil, astride on his neck, is blowing into his ears, while he pays no sort of regard to the poor man, who is tapping his shoulder, and in the most suppliant posture asking to be heard. Death seems to be rising from the earth, in indignation, to put an end to this interesting conversation.

Qui obturat aurem suam ad clamorem pauperis, et ipse clamabit, & non exaudietur. Prov. xxi. 13.

PLANCHE XXX.—LE CONSEILLER.

Ce magistrat paroît fort occupé à donner en pleine rue à un homme riche, des conseils qu'un petit diable à califourchon sur son cou lui souffle aux oreilles, tandis qu'il ne fait aucune attention au pauvre qui lui touche doucement l'épaule, & démande dans l'attitude la plus suppliante à être écouté. La Mort indignée semble sortir de terre, pour mettre fin à cette conversation intéressée.

PLATE XXXI.—THE ADVOCATE.

This subject answers to No. 29. The example of the Judge seems to authorize the Advocate to get himself well paid for his prevarication, and that even in the presence of his poor client, whose wretched condition would raise compassion in any breast less obdurate than that of the lawyer. But Death will avenge the oppressed; he is pouring into the hands of the Advocate money in abundance, of which he will have little use, for he is, at the same instant, shewing him, with an air of insult, his sand run out.

Callidus vidit malum, & abscondit, sed innocens pertransiit & afflictus est damno. Prov. xxii. 3.

PLANCHE XXXI.—L'AVOCAT.

Ce sujet se rapporte au No. 29. L'exemple du Juge semble autoriser l'Avocat à se faire payer chérement ses prévarications, & cela même en présence de son pauvre client qui se tient dans un certain éloignement, & dont l'état misérable feroit pitié à une ame moins dure que celle de l'homme de loi. Mais la Mort vengera l'opprimé; elle verse abondamment dans les mains de l'Avocat de l'argent dont il ne profitera guère, car elle lui montre en même tems d'un air moqueur son sable écoulé.

Callidus vidit malum, & abscondit se: innocens pertransiit & afflictus est damno. PROVER XXII

Qui congregat thesauros lingua mendacij. vanus & excors est, & impingetur ad laqueos

MORTIS. PROVER. XXI.

PLATE XXXII.—THE MERCHANT.

ESCAPED from the dangers of the sea, and safely arrived in port, this rich Merchant believes himself now in perfect safety; but he is mistaken. Employed in counting his money, examining his goods, and treating about their disposal, a bad customer, Death himself, comes up, and it is his person only that he wants to bargain for.

Qui congregat thesauros lingua mendacii, vanus et excors est, & impingetur ad laqueos Mortis. Prov. xxi. 6.

PLANCHE XXXII.—LE MARCHAND.

ECHAPPÉ aux périls de la mer, arrivé heureusement au port, ce riche Marchand se croit en pleine sécurité; il se trompe. Occupé à compter son argent, à examiner ses marchandises & à traiter de leur vente, un mauvais chaland, la Mort elle-même, arrive, & ce n'est que de sa personne qu'elle veut faire emplette.

PLATE XXXIII.—THE HAWKER.

Bending under the weight of his load, he is advancing, with a quick pace, to the neighbouring town, comforting himself with thinking on the gain he is to make there; but Death, in the form of two skeletons, is come to put a sudden end to his labours and his hopes. One of the skeletons is dragging him forcibly by the arm, while the other behind him is playing on a marine trumpet. It is in vain that the poor Hawker points with his finger to the place where his business calls him; this disagreeable company appears desirous of making him take another road.

Venite ad me omnes, qui laboratis, et onerati estis. Matth. xi. 28.

PLANCHE XXXIII.—LE COLPORTEUR.

Courbé sous le poids de sa charge, il avance à grands pas vers le lieu voisin, & trouve du soulagement en rêvant au gain qu'il pourroit y faire; mais la Mort, sous la figure de deux squelettes, est venue subitement mettre fin à ses peines & à ses espérances. L'un des squelettes le tire avec force par le bras, tandis que l'autre joue derrière lui de la trompette marine. C'est en vain que le pauvre Colporteur montre des doigts l'endroit où ses affaires l'appellent, cette fâcheuse compagnie paroît vouloir lui faire prendre une autre route.

Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis & onerati estis.
MATTH. XI.

PLATE XXXIV.—THE SHIPWRECK.

Death here is exercising his power on one of his most fertile domains. He himself is breaking the mast of a ship violently tossed by the tempest, and throws all the passengers into the most fearful despair. One alone we can distinguish, near the mast, who preserves the tranquillity of mind which, in the greatest danger, a good conscience yields to firm and intrepid minds; his head has all the features with which Socrates is usually represented.

Qui volunt ditescere incidunt in tentationem & laqueum, & cupiditates multas stultas & noxias, quæ demergunt homines in exitum & interitum. 1 ad Timo. vi. 9.

PLANCHE XXXIV.----LE NAUFRAGE.

La Mort exerce ici son empire sur un de ses plus fertiles domaines; elle brise elle-même le mât d'un vaisseau violemment agité par la tempête, & jette tous les passagers dans le plus affreux désespoir. On en distingue un seul placé près du mât, qui a conservé cette tranquillité d'ame qu'une bonne conscience accorde dans les plus grands périls aux esprits fermes & courageux; sa tête a tous les traits sous lesquels on représente ordinairement Socrate.

PLATE XXXV.—THE WAGGONER.

We see Death here venting his capricious fury on a cart of wine that a poor Waggoner is conducting. Without doubt, the man himself will soon come, in his turn, to be the sport of his caprice; and the same cause that has now produced, will ere long effectually finish his despair.

Cæcus cæcum ducit: & ambo in foveam cadunt. Matth. xv. 14.

PLANCHE XXXV.—LE VOITURIER.

On voit ici la Mort exercer ses bizarres fureurs sur un char de vin que conduit un pauvre Voiturier. Sans doute que lui-même va dévenir à son tour le jouet de ses caprices, & que la même cause qui vient d'occasionner son désespoir ne tardera pas à le terminer.

Cecidit in curru suo. I. CHRON. XXII

In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo.
GEN. III.

PLATE XXXVI.—THE HUSBANDMAN.

Were Death capable of considerations, what class of society would better deserve to be exempted from his ravages, than the labourers; incontestably the most useful, most laborious, and most productive of real opulence? But he is now striking the horses harnessed to this Husbandman's plough; and this enemy of the human race can strike no blow more severely felt, than by thus attacking it in the source of its subsistence.

In sudore vultus tui vesceris pane tuo. Gen. iii. 19.

PLANCHE XXXVI.—LE LABOUREUR.

Si la Mort pouvoit user de quelque considération, qu'elle classe de la société mériteroit mieux d'en être ménagée que celle du laboureur, sans contredit la plus utile, la plus laborieuse, & la plus productive des véritables richesses? Mais elle frappe déjà les chevaux attelés à la charrue de ce Cultivateur, & cette ennemie du genre humain ne sauroit lui porter des coups plus sensibles qu'en l'attaquant dans les sources de sa subsistance.

PLATE XXXVII.—THE MISER.

The character of the Miser is very forcibly expressed in this sketch. Shut up in a vault, which receives the light only through a wicket, secured with a double grate of thick iron bars, he is entirely taken up with his beloved treasure, a considerable part whereof Death is snatching up before his eyes. This loss excites in him all the symptoms of the most violent desperation, and it plainly appears that his gold is an hundred times dearer to his heart than his life.

Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam: & quæ parâsti, cujus erunt? Lucæ xii. 20.

PLANCHE XXXVII.—L'AVARE.

Le caractére de l'Avare est rendu dans ce dessein avec beaucoup d'énergie. Renfermé dans un caveau qui ne reçoit du jour que par une lucarne garnie d'une double grille d'épais barreaux de fer, il n'est occupé que de son cher trésor, dont la Mort lui enlève à ses yeux un portion très-considérable. Cette perte excite en lui tous les symptomes du plus violent désespoir, & l'on voit bien ques on or lui tient cent fois plus à cœur que la vie.

Stulte, hac nocte repetunt animam tuam, & quæ parasti, cujus erunt? LUCÆ XII

DOMINE, cum patiar. ESAIAE XXXVIII

PLATE XXXVIII.—THE HIGHWAY ROBBER.

THIS ill-fated man attacks in a forest, a country girl returning from the fair, and is endeavouring to take from her what she is bringing from thence; but, fortunately for the poor woman, Death comes to her assistance; and laying hold of the Robber, prevents, probably only by a few days, the hangman, who would have made him bear on a scaffold the punishment due to his crimes.

Quasi agnus lasciviens & ignorans, nescit quod ad vincula stultus trahatur. Prov. vii. 22.

PLANCHE XXXVIII.—LE VOLEUR DE GRAND CHEMIN.

CE malheureux attaque dans une forêt une paysanne qui revient de la foire, & veut lui enlever ce quelle en rapporte; mais heureusement pour la pauvre femme, la Mort vient à son secours, & en se saisissant du Voleur elle ne prévient peut-être que de quelques jours le bourreau, qui lui auroit fait porter sur un échaffaut la peine de ses crimes.

PLATE XXXIX.—THE DRUNKARDS.

Debauchery, and, above all, excess in drinking, undoubtedly furnish Death with powerful arms for committing his ravages. Here he appears pouring the wine in great abundance into the throat of one of these Drunkards, and the most beastly drunkenness reigns in these disgusting orgies.

Et nolite inebriari vino, in quo est luxuria. Eph. v. 18.

PLANCHE XXXIX.—LES YVROGNES.

La débauche & surtout les excès de la boisson fournissent sans cesse à la Mort des armes puissantes pour exercer ses ravages. On la voit ici qui entonne le vin à grands flots dans le gozier d'un de ces Yvrognes, & la plus grossière crapule préside à cette dégoutante orgie.

Ne inebriemini vino, in quo est luxum.
EPHES. V.

Quid prodest, homini si universum Mundum lucretur; animæ autem suæ detrimentum patiatur?
MATTH. XVI.

PLATE XL.—THE GAMESTERS.

HERE is another company well worthy of the former; and the fate of those who compose it is nearly the same; it only differs in this, that the Devil and Death are disputing which of them shall carry off the losing Gamester. It is a contest, if we may say so, frightful as well as ludicrous, so much the more so, that the second Gamester, interesting himself in the fate of the first, is addressing fervent prayers to the Devil on his behalf; but the third is doing still better, taking the advantage of this moment of trouble and terror, to gather in the money that is lying on the table.

Quid enim prodest homini, si mundum universum lucretur, animæ vero suæ detrimentum patiatur? Matth. xvi. 26.

PLANCHE XL.—LES JOUEURS.

VOICI une autre compagnie bien digne de la précédente; aussi le sort de ceux qui la composent est-il à peu près le même; il ne deffère qu'en ce que le Diable & la Mort se disputent qui des deux emportera le Joueur qui a perdu. C'est un combat, s'il est permis de le dire, aussi effroyable que comique, d'autant plus que le second Joueur, s'intéressant au sort du premier, addresse de ferventes prières au Diable en sa faveur; mais le troisième fait encore mieux, & profite de ce moment de trouble & d'effroi, pour ramasser l'argent qui se trouve sur la table.

PLATE XLI.—THE OLD MAN.

HERE we see Death leading away, playing on a psaltery, an Old Man to the brink of the grave, bent under the load of years, and verging to the last degree of frailty. The Old Man allows himself to be carried off, with that calmness and tranquillity, which are the effects of wisdom, and the fruits of a good conscience.

Spiritus meus attenuabitur, dies mei breviabuntur, & solum mihi superest sepulchrum. Job xvii. 1.

PLANCHE XLI.—LE VIEILLARD.

L'ON voit ici la Mort qui conduit sur le bord de sa fosse, en jouant du psalterion, un Vieillard courbé sous le poids des années, & parvenu au dernier dégré de la caducité. Le Vieillard se laisse emmener avec ce calme & cette tranquillite qui sont l'apanage de la sagesse & les fruits d'une bonne conscience

Spiritus meus attenuabitur, dies mi breuiabun
tur: & solum mihi superest sepulchrum. JOB. XVII.

Melior est Mors, quam Vita.

ECCLE. XXX.

PLATE XLII.—THE OLD WOMAN.

The grim countenance of this good old Dame does not indicate the same resignation as appears in the former subject. Wholly occupied in mumbling her rosary, she pays no attention to the sound of a dulcimer, on which one of her conductors is playing. The other skeleton, impatient of the slowness of the Old Woman's march, is employing menaces and blows to make her advance.

Melior est mors quam vita. Eccle. xxx. 17.

PLANCHE XLII.—LA VIEILLE.

Le visage rechigné de cette bonne Vieille n'annonce pas la même résignation que dans le sujet précédent. Toute occupée à marmotter son rosaire, elle ne prête aucune attention au son du timpanon dont joue l'une de ses conductrices. L'autre squelette impatient de la lenteur que la bonne Vieille met dans sa marche, emploie les menaces & les coups pour la faire avancer.

PLATE XLIII.—THE BLIND MAN.

This poor Blind Man is following, with an air of chagrin, his new conductor, who, without pity, is leading him through wretched roads. In vain does he attempt, by groping his way, to avoid the obstacles that oppose his reluctant march; he will not avoid that fatal goal to which Death is conducting him, and which will be the only termination of his evils.

Domine vim patior. Isaiæ xxxviii. 14.

Cæci sunt, & duces cæcorum. Cæcus autem si cæco ducatum præstet, ambo in foveam cadunt. Matth. xv. 14.

PLANCHE XLIII.—L'AVEUGLE.

Ce pauvre Aveugle suit d'un air chagrin son nouveau conducteur qui le mène impitoyablement par les plus mauvais chemins; en vain veut-il éviter, en tâtonnant, les obstacles qui s'opposent à sa marche forcée; il n'évitera pas le terme fatal où la Mort le conduit, et qui ne sera dans le fond que celui de ses maux.

Cæcus cæcum ducit: Xamba in fóueam cadunt. MATTH XV.

Miser ego homo. Quis me liberabit de corpore mortis huius. ROM. VII.

PLATE XLIV.—THE BEGGAR.

In the most deplorable situation, lame, and exposed almost naked to the injuries of the weather, he is set down before a rich man's house, into which he has the mortification to see several enter, who look at him without ever thinking of relieving his distress. Death, not less cruel than capricious, whose aid alone he implores, and in whose power it is to make him happy, deaf to his prayers, allows him to groan under the load of evils which overwhelm him, whilst he delights to tear from this life those who think themselves happy, or are attached to it by the strongest ties.

Corruit in curru suo. Chron. xxii.

PLANCHE XLIV.—LE MENDIANT.

Dans l'état le plus déplorable, estropié, exposé presque nud aux injures du tems, il est assis devant la maison d'un homme opulent, dans laquelle il a la douleur de voir entrer plusieurs personnes qui le regardent sans songer à soulager ses peines. La Mort non moins cruelle que bizarre, dont lui seul implore le secours, & qui pourroit faire son bonheur, sourde à ses prières, le laisse gémir sous le poids des maux qui l'accablent, tandis qu'elle se plaît à arracher de cette vie ceux qui s'y croient heureux, ou qui y tiennent par les liens les plus puissans.

PLATE XLV.—THE CHILD.

If under the roof of poverty there is any comfort, it is in having children, by whom we may hope one day to be solaced. This is the case with this poor widow; but death is of a different opinion, and is come to carry off her youngest Child, unmoved by her prayers and lamentations.

Homo natus de muliere, brevi vivens tempore, repletur multis miseriis: qui quasi flos egreditur & conteritur, & fugit velut umbra. Job xiv. 1, 2.

PLANCHE XLV.—L'ENFANT.

Si sous le toit de la pauvreté il y a quelque consolation, c'est d'avoir des enfans dont on peut espérer d'être un jour soulagé. C'est le cas de cette pauvre veuve, mais la Mort n'est point de cet avis, & vient de lui enlever le plus petit sans se laisser fléchir, ni par ses prières ni par ses lamentations.

Homo natus de muliere, breui viuens tempore, repletur multis miserijs: qui quasi flos egreditur, & conteritur, & fugit velut umbra Iob. XIV.

Quasi agnus lasciuiens, & ignorans, nescit quod ad vincula stultus trahatur.
PROVER. VII

PLATE XLVI.—THE FOOL.

Death is leading him away gaily, making him dance to the sound of a bagpipe. The Fool, ignorant without doubt of the catastrophe that awaits him, seems to be meditating some piece of mischief, which will probably be his last.

This dancing couple finish the procession, wherein Holbein has had the skill to unite a salutary moral with the gayest and liveliest sallies that form a singular contrast with the sadness of the subject.

Quasi agnus lasciviens, & ignorans quod ad vincula stultus trahatur. Prov. vii. 22.

PLANCHE XLVI. LE FOU.

La Mort l'emmène gaiement en le faisant danser au son d'une cornemuse; le Fou qui ne sait pas sans doute la catastrophe qui l'attend, paroît méditer une malice qui sera vraisemblablement la dernière.

Ce couple dansant termine la marche de cette suite où Holbein a sû réunir une morale salutaire, aux sallies les plus gaies & les plus plaisantes qui contrastent singulièrement avec la tristesse du sujet.

THE END.

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